NUMB. XXXI.

The GUARDIAN.

Fortem posce animum — Juv.

Thursday, April 16. 1713.

MY Lady *Lizard* is never better pleased than when she sees her Children about her engaged in any profitable Discourse. I found her last Night sitting in the midst of her Daughters, and forming a very beautiful Semi-circle about the Fire. I immediately took my place in an Elbow Chair, which is always left empty for me in one Corner.

Our Conversation fell insensibly upon the Subject of Happiness, in which every one of the young Ladies gave her Opinion, with that Freedom and Unconcernedness which they always use when they are in Company only with their Mother and myself.

Mrs. *Jane* declared, that she thought it the greatest Happiness to be married to a Man of Merit, and placed at the Head of a well regulated Family. I could not but observe, that in her Character of a Man of Merit, she gave us a lively Description of *Tom. Worthy*, who has long made his Addresses to her. The Sisters did not discover this at first, till she began to run down Fortune in a Lover, and among the Accomplishments of a Man of Merit, unluckily mentioned white Teeth and black Eyes.

Mrs. *Annabella*, after having rallied her Sister upon her Man of Merit, talked much of Conveniences of Life, Affluence of Fortune, and Easiness of Temper in one whom she should pitch upon for a Husband. In short, tho' the Baggage would not speak out, I found the Sum of her Wishes was a rich Fool, or a Man so turned to her Purposes, that she might enjoy his Fortune, and insult his Understanding.

The Romantick *Cornelia* was for living in a Wood among Choirs of Birds, with Zephyrs, Echo's and Rivulets to make up the Consort; she would not seem to include a Husband in her Scheme, but at the same time talked so passionately of Cooing Turtles, Mossie Banks, and Beds of Violets, that one might easily perceive she was not without Thoughts of a Companion in her Solitudes.

Miss *Betty* placed her *Summum bonum* in Equipages, Assemblies, Balls and Birth-nights, talked in Raptures of Sir *Edward Shallow*'s gilt Coach, and my Lady *Tattle*'s Room, in which she saw Company; nor would she have easily given over, had she not observed that her Mother appeared more serious then ordinary, and by her Looks shewed that she did not approve such a Redundance of Vanity and Impertinence.

My Favourite, the *Sparkler*, with an Air of Innocence and Modesty which is peculiar to her, said that she never expected such a thing as Happiness, and that she thought the most any one could do, was to keep themselves from being uneasie; for as Mr. *Ironside* has often told us, says she, we should endeavour to be easie here, and happy hereafter: At the same time she begged me to acquaint them by what Rules this ease of Mind, or if I would please to call it Happiness, is best attained.

My Lady *Lizard* joined in the same Request with her youngest Daughter, adding with a serious Look, The thing seemed to her of so great Consequence, that she hoped I would for once forget they were all Women, and give my real Thoughts of it with the same justness I would use among a Company of my own Sex. I complied with her Desire, and communicated my Sentiments to them on this Subject, as near as I can remember pretty much to the following purpose.

As nothing is more natural than for every one to desire to be happy, it is not to be wondered at that the wisest Men in all Ages have spent so much time to discover what Happiness is, and wherein it chiefly consists. An eminent Writer, named *Varro*, reckons up no less than two hundred eighty eight different Opinions upon this Subject; and another, called *Lucian*, after having given us a long Catalogue of the Notions of several Philosophers, endeavours to shew the Absurdity of all of them, without establishing any thing of his own.

That which seems to have made so many err in this Case, is the resolution they took to fix a Man's Happiness to one determined Point, which I conceive cannot be made up but by the Concurrence of several Particulars.

I shall readily allow *Vertue* the first place, as she is the Mother of *Content*. It is this which calms

our

(Price Two Pence.)